

JP Orientation

Purpose, Requirements, and Deadlines

The Junior Paper is a significant piece of writing and analysis, intended to develop your ability to produce a sustained, rigorous, and original reading of a particular text. Most often, the Junior Paper analyzes a single text (literary, philosophical, theoretical, etc.) with respect to an issue related to your Fundamentals Question. You should expect to write a paper of about 22-25 pages. Because you are asked to engage with your own question and your own thoughts, it is not necessary or even encouraged to use secondary literature on your text or on the issue, lest you run the risk of turning your paper into a series of book reviews; but if you do use additional sources you should cite them in full. The Junior Paper is important not only as a milestone in your completion of the Fundamentals degree program; it may also serve as a writing sample for applications to graduate programs, scholarships, or professional opportunities. Be ready to put a lot of work into the paper; this work will pay dividends.

Structure

The paper is typically written in the Winter Quarter of your third year. The Autumn Quarter is also when you will determine your text, topic, and JP Adviser. Your JP Adviser will typically be the professor who taught the text you have selected for your paper; he or she does not need to be your Fundamentals Adviser. This professor will be closely involved with the process, helping you formulate your ideas in conversation and providing feedback on your rough drafts. It's no small time commitment, so make sure the professor is aware of this before signing on! The JP Adviser will be your first grader. There will also be a Second Reader. The Second Reader reads the final draft and evaluates it, sending in a second grade to the Fundamentals office. You may suggest one or two people as possible Second Readers if you like, but the final decision belongs to the Chair in consultation with the Fundamentals Coordinator. To provide you with additional structure, we will have JP Seminar over the course of the Winter Quarter. Sign up for this seminar under the course number FNDL 29901. Your paper will be graded pass/fail, with recommendations for honors if the essay is of exceptional quality. Although the two evaluations are confidential, you are strongly encouraged to meet with your readers after the final JP has been submitted (or communicate by email) and hear their feedback.

Timeline

It is likely that this paper will be two to three times longer than any previous paper you have written at the University of Chicago, and this is a fact you need to take seriously. Writing a piece of this length takes preparation, planning, and a sense of strategy. It is always useful to create an outline, which you can amend as needed as you write the paper. We advise you to approach it by dividing your thesis into two or three distinct sections, each of which analyzes a significant component of your thesis or focuses on one of the major relevant sections of your text (e.g., sections comparing Characters A, B, and C, or analyzing Parts 1, 2, and 3). To facilitate your planning, we have compiled the various dates and deadlines of the Junior Paper process. Please make a note of what you need to do and when.

A. The preparation quarter: writing the JP Proposal

The quarter for writing the JP Proposal is Autumn.

- Around Week 7, we will have an orientation meeting where we go over this document and address your questions. By this point, you should know your text, topic, and JP Adviser. If you have not formally confirmed who your adviser will be, you should do so in the following two weeks.
- By Friday of Week 10, you must submit your JP Proposal and the JP Advising Form to the Coordinator (hard copy). The proposal consists of a one-page statement that details your selected text, paper topic, and how this project relates to your Fundamentals question, with an approximation of the thesis you plan to argue. Have your JP Adviser read this statement and then sign the JP Advising Form, available online at fundamentals.uchicago.edu/page/documents.

B. The writing quarter is Winter.

Here are the deadlines you will be held to:

- Week 1: JP Seminars begin. The purpose of these meetings will be to check progress and discuss problems.
- Friday Week 1: Provisional outline due. This is a one- or two-page outline of your paper, which you will submit to both your JP Adviser and the Program Coordinator. This is a provisional document, and it's natural for your structure to evolve in the course of writing; organize your outlines with care and consideration nonetheless. Try to meet with your JP Adviser and discuss your outlines before Week 3.
- Friday Week 3: Sign up for FNDL 29901. Get a College Research and Reading Course form from your College Adviser. The section number for the class will correspond with the Program Chair (for Malynne, section 20). Get a signature from the Coordinator or the Program Chair, then return the form to your College Adviser.
- Monday Week 8: First draft due. Submit your complete first draft of your JP to the Coordinator and your JP Adviser. This will allow you time to consult with your JP Adviser and make any necessary revisions before the finished paper is due.
- Wednesday Week 10: Final draft (NOT final version) due. Send your final draft and JP Evaluation Form (available online at fundamentals.uchicago.edu/page/documents) to

your JP Adviser. This deadline gives your JP Adviser enough time to read and approve your finished paper.

C. Final Version (Spring Quarter)

About a week after you have submitted your final draft, check in with your JP Adviser to see if he or she has any further edits for you to do. Any last-minute revisions should be submitted to your Adviser before Friday of Week 1 in Spring Quarter. Once the paper has been approved by your Adviser, email a PDF copy to the Program Coordinator for our records by Monday Week 2. The Coordinator will forward the paper to your Second Reader.

Summary

The Junior Paper is intended to be an intellectual and not a bureaucratic exercise; the important thing is that you write a good paper! These deadlines have been carefully determined but may be reconsidered and slightly adjusted at the discretion of particular Junior Paper Advisers. The approval date for each quarter is not flexible. If an adviser chooses to change any deadlines, please notify the Program Coordinator.